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THE SPINOZIST GOD VERSUS THE GOD OF JEWISH PHILOSOPHY FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE CLASSICAL AGE: THE QUESTION OF THE QUATENUS

Jacques J. Rozenberg[1]

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France

ABSTRACT: Although presented by German philosophers of Nature as a "drunk" man with God, Spinoza was soon considered a pure atheist, and in particular by Orobio de Castro, who was the first Jewish critic of the *Ethics*. His analysis focused on the theoretical difficulties of this work, specifically demonstrating that Spinozism consists in imperceptibly shifting from a reference to God as traditionally defined by His uniqueness to His identification with multiple nature. Orobio de Castro showed that such a shift was made possible by a semantic procedure, retaining the same reference but radically changing its meaning. He thus mentions reduplicative formulas, using the term *quatenus*. This article aims, on the one hand, to bring to light the semantic role of the term *quatenus*, which made it possible to elaborate the Spinozist conception of a God immanent in nature, and on the other hand, to confront Spinoza's use of this term with that proposed by Jewish philosophy in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Classical Age.

KEYWORDS: God; Spinoza; quatenus; Orobio de Castro; intension; extension; Maimonides; Gersonides

Introduction

As the two informants, Tomás Solano y Robles and Miguel Pérez de Maltranilla, reported before the Tribunal of the Inquisition in 1659, Spinoza had declared, a year earlier, that there was no God, but in a philosophical sense of the term (*non havia Dios sino es filosofalmente*) (Révah, 1959, pp. 31-32).[2] This confirms the judgment of Olaus

[1] https://cnrs.academia.edu/JacquesRozenberg

[2] I want to thank Igor Agostini, Alexander Douglas, Don Garrett, Roberto Poli, Jean Pierre Rothschild, and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper. Concerning Spinoza's works, I refer to the Latin edition: Baruch de Spinoza Opera, edited by Carl

Borsh in 1661, calling Spinoza an atheist (Israel, 2001, p. 163; Colerus 1999, p. 5; Klever 1990, pp. 281-289; Bedjai 1991, p. 24).[3] Despite the title of the first book of the *Ethics*, *De Deo*, Spinoza's God is not a god (Misrahi, 1977, p. 219). Spinoza sought only to prove the existence of substance, itself synonymous with material nature. As could be pointed out, Spinoza believed only in the God of Spinoza (Rousset, 1996, p. 269), and that is why the author of the *Ethics* will be qualified, by Lucien Febvre, as a "believer in unbelief" (Febvre, 1947, p. 40). However, in the 18th and 19th centuries, Spinoza was celebrated by the philosophers of Nature and by German Romantics, from Goethe to Novalis. The former, in seeking to refute the traditional accusation of atheism, called Spinoza a "Theissimus," or even a "Christianissimus" (Goethe, 1968, pp. I, 475; Stieg, 1999, pp. 63-75), and the latter saw in him a "person drunk with God (*der Gott betrunkene Mensch*)" (Novalis, 1837, p. 253). However, for Spinoza, God is no longer a personal, transcendent, creator and legislator God, as Judaism and the other monotheistic religions have defined Him. For Spinoza, God is the one substance (monism), infinite, necessarily existing according to the laws of nature.

I will begin by examining the theoretical foundations of Itshaq Orobio de Castro's (1617-1687) critical reading of Spinozism. Orobio de Castro was a Marrano physician-philosopher who arrived in Amsterdam in 1666, where he devoted himself to defending Jewish orthodoxy. This critique focuses in particular on the objective conception of divine attributes, supported by Spinoza's disciple Johannes Bredenburg (1643–1691), a member of the Collegiants group, a Dutch Christian movement that emphasizes mysticism without any confession of faith, to which Spinoza himself belonged. I will furthermore show how, through his analysis of the confusion between the notions of diversity, difference, and distinction, Orobio de Castro proves that only a subjective approach to divine attributes can preserve God's simplicity. I will then clarify Orobio de Castro's critique of Spinoza's surreptitious shift from the traditional conception of God to its natural reformulation, and his use of reduplicative terms. I will pay particular attention to one of these terms, *quatenus,* whose systematic use fully sustains the Spinozist system. I support the thesis that the distinction between intension and extension can help us understand the genesis of the difficulties of Spinozism, which is entirely built on an illegitimate passage from one order to another. The juxtaposition of these two contradictory points of view has never been justified or even pointed out by Spinoza. My approach presents a global and stratified epistemological perspective capable of solving several problems inherent in Spinozism. It developed them from a series of dualisms, all expressing an opposition between the intensional and extensional orders: substance and attributes, substance and modes, reason and cause, infinity and the finite, the naturing and the natured, the mind and the body, etc. Finally, I will analyze the equivalent function of the term *quatenus* in Medieval Jewish philosophy, which seems to have served as a model for

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Gebhardt, Heidelberg, Universitätsbuchhandlung Carl Winter, 1925. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated. Regarding the transliteration of Hebrew, I have generally followed the system of Ch. L. Echols and Th. Legrand Transliteration of Hebrew Consonants, Vowels, and Accents, etc. Academia.edu.

[3] According to Colerus, it was Franciscus van den Enden who sowed among his followers "the first seeds of atheism" Colerus 1999, p. 5.

Spinoza's use of this term, highlighting then the fundamental differences that can be observed between these two uses.

Orobio de Castro and the First Jewish Refutation of Spinozist Metaphysics

Itshaq Orobio de Castro, who presented the first Jewish refutation of Spinoza's metaphysics (Kaplan, 2004, p. 265 n6), summarized the main objections that followers of the Law of Moses could argue against the *Ethics*.[4] He thus inaugurated, on a metaphysical level, the "Spinoza controversy" (Schwartz, 2019, pp. 6-7).[5] In 1684, Orobio de Castro published his work *Certamen Philosophicum Propugnatæ Veritatis Divinæ ac Naturalis Adversus J. Bredenburgi Principia*. This work was a critique of Spinozism through that of the writings of the Collegiant Johannes Bredenburg (1643–1691): *Enervatio, tractatus theologico-politici, una demonstratione, geometrico ordine disposita, naturam non esse Deum*, published in 1675 (Bredenburg, 1675; van Bunge, 1990, p. 121).[6] Bredenburg sought, among other things, to disavow Frans Kuyper's (or Cuperis) (1629-1681) criticism of Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (Cuperis, 1676, Touber, 2018, p. 105).

Bredenburg-Spinoza's *Definition* I, which Orobio de Castro aims to refute, states: "By a being or anything necessary is meant a being whose existence proceeds from its essence, or a being that exists necessary in an essential way" (*Per ens, vel aliquid necessarium, intelligitur ens, cujus existentia est de eius essentia: vel ens quod necessario essentialiter est*). Orobio de Castro emphasizes that this proposition is true (*vera est*) if it applies to God alone (*soli Deo*), but when it is applied to creatures, or to nature as a whole, as Spinoza does, one denies "the one God, creator of the universe, and believes that the whole universe is God: which is precisely Spinoza's atheism." (*unicum Deum universi creatorem negat : et totum universum credit esse Deum; quod Spinozae atheismum plane constituit*) (Orobio de Castro, 1703, p. 10). Orobio de Castro shows that the subtlety of Spinozism consists in passing imperceptibly from one plane to another, pretending to refer to God as He is traditionally defined by His uniqueness, when in fact it applies His definition to the multiple nature.

To bring to light this process of surreptitious passage, Orobio de Castro analyzes Bredenburg-Spinoza's *Definition* II, positing that "Attributes are qualities whose essence constitutes the nature of the thing of which they are the attributes or qualities, so that they are not distinct from the being of which they are the attributes or qualities"

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[4] Yosef Kaplan cites several criticisms of Spinoza, emanating from members of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam, such as Miguel de Barrios and Jacob Antrade, prior to that of Orobio de Castro, but these criticisms were mainly directed at the theses of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* and not at those of the *Ethics*.

[5] Jonathan I. Israel has shown how, from the 1720s and 1730s, the works of Orobio de Castro were incorporated into the French underground literature, because of his criticism of Christianity. By putting his defense of the Mosaic Law in the background, as well as his opposition to Spinoza, the writings of Orobio de Castro thus contributed to the subversive Radical Enlightenment that developed in the 18th century. See Israel, 2021, pp. 107-108.

[6] Bredenburg, who had taken the side of Spinoza, among the Collegiants, was at first critical of him, but he ended up adhering entirely to Spinozism.

(*Attributa sunt qualitates, quarum essentia naturam constituit istius rei, cujus sunt attributa, vel qualitates: adeo ut ab ipso ente, cujus sunt attributa, vel qualitates, non sint distincta*). For Orobio de Castro, this definition, like the first, would be acceptable if it related these attributes exclusively to the one God, specifying also that God, being a simple essence (*simplicissima essentia*), without any quality (*in Deo nullae sunt qualitates*). Qualities constitute the affections of a substance (*affectiones quaedam substantiae*) and therefore have no subsistence by themselves (*per se*). For this reason, the essential attributes (*attributa essentialia*) cannot even be called qualities in an analogical way (*analogice*), because this would imply a relationship of commensurability between God and His creatures (Orobio de Castro, 1703, p. 11). Orobio de Castro takes up the Maimonidean notion of 'homonymy (*beshytuf*) which we apply the name of will (*raçon*) both to our will and to that of the Separate Being (*ha-nivdal*) (Maimonides, 1963, pp. II, 18, 203). He then emphasizes the idea of disproportion between the sign and its meaning: "the name is the same, but the notion of signified is entirely disjointed" (*quorum nomen est commune, ratio vero significati omnino diversa*) (Orobio de Castro, 1703, p. 65). In this sense, the notion of *natura*, divided into *naturans* and *naturata*, would play, *mutatis mutandis*, the role of the « floating signifier, » a notion introduced by Claude Lév-Strauss, emphasizing the dual function of a same term. Faced with all the phenomena that remain unknown to him, man tends to look for explanations which are really lacking. Such floating signifiers, which have no real semiotic value, however, cause symbolic thought to function through substitutions (Lévi-Strauss 1999, XLVII; Topolski, 2014, pp. 41-59).

Spinoza posits that "In Nature, there is nothing contingent; but everything is determined by the necessity of the divine nature to exist and to act according to a particular modality" (*In rerum natura nullum datur contingens sed omnia ex necessitate divinae naturae determinata sunt ad certo modo existendum et operandum*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 29). This is why, according to Spinoza, every action is necessarily determined. In his *Proposition* III, Orobio de Castro challenges this thesis, showing that it stems from Spinoza's negation of the notion of creation *ex nihilo*.[7] This is why action cannot constitute any novelty, because that would imply that it could come from nothing. This assumption, which Orobio de Castro qualifies as an axiom (*axioma*) and a dogma (*sed dogmaticum*), aims to posit that existences and actions are eternally determined (Orobio de Castro 1703, p. 37). As a result, Spinoza comes to deny the faculty of will or non-will (*volendi et nolendi*), for everyone is necessarily determined to will this or that action by a necessary cause (Spinoza 1925, Ethics II, 48, demonstration).[8] Now man can always, at a given moment, not want to achieve something and then want it later. Orobio de Castro underlined that to deny this observation forces us to suppose that from all eternity two contradictory actions have coincided, and this supposition clashes with logic itself (Orobio de Castro, 1703, p. 37).

[7] In the *Short Treatise*, Spinoza asserted that "out of nothingness nothing can come out" (*van de Niet kan geen iet voortkomen*) (Spinoza 1925, KV I, 2, para. 8) and in the *Ethics* he considers it absurd that something can arise from nothing (*quod ex nihilo aliquid fiat*) (*Ethics* IV, 20 scholium).

[8] Yosef ben Shlomo pointed out that Spinoza's rejection of free will is one of his primary arguments against Judaism. See ben Shlomo, 1983, pp. 99-101.

As I shall show later, despite the clear distinction that Spinoza made between substance and its affections, the impossibility of deducing the finite modes from the infinite substance led him to identify these two incommensurable domains. Orobio de Castro's analysis has revealed the difficulties of Spinoza's concept of attributes, which makes the monism of substance problematic. Nearly a century before Hegel, Orobio de Castro was the first commentator to propose a subjective interpretation of attributes. This interpretation conceives attributes as multiple forms specific to intellect, thus allowing us to grasp substance while preserving its simplicity and uniqueness.[9]

Following Maimonides (Maimonides 1963, I, p. 52), Orobio de Castro seeks to prove that attributes, while allowing us to relate to God, concern only His actions and not His essence. Whereas for Spinoza, the attribute "is what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence (*quod intellectus de substantia percipit tanquam ejusdem essentiam constituens*)" (Spinoza 1925, Ethics, I, definition IV, Ethics, I, 19), according to Orobio de Castro, attributes are mere qualities, which only express the "weakness of our intellect (*nostri intellectu imbecillitatem*)" (Orobio de Castro, 1703, pp. 11-12). He thus attempts to refute the objectivism of the attributes that Bredenburg aims to justify. He emphasizes that such a conception necessarily implies a multiplicity of heterogeneous attributes, whereas they are supposed to constitute the single substance. Analyzing Propositions 4 and 5 of the *De Deo*, Orobio de Castro shows that the author of the *Ethics* has undermined divine simplicity, which remains incompatible with the notion of composition. He adds that Spinoza confused, with regard to attributes, three forms of discernment: *diversity*, *difference* and *distinction* (*diversitatem, differentiam and distinctionem inepte confundunt*) (Orobio de Castro, 1703, p. 59). In *Ethics* I, 4, and in *Ethics* I, 5, Demonstration, Spinoza mentions only *diversity* and *distinction*, whereas the term *differentia* will appear only in *Ethics* II, 17, Scholium. According to Orobio de Castro, *diversity* is the strongest form of discernment: two things are diverse if they have no species or genus in common, and therefore they are incomparable. Spinoza states precisely, in *Ethics* I, 4: "Two or more distinct things are distinguished from each other, either because the attributes of substances are diverse, or because the affections of these same substances are diverse (*Duæ aut plures res distinctæ vel inter se distinguuntur ex diversitate attributorum substantiarum vel ex diversitate earundem affectionum*)" (Spinoza 1925, Ethics I, 4). According to Orobio de Castro's classification, Spinoza's description of the attributes in terms of *diversity* then makes them heterogeneous from each other; thus contradicting the essence of the divine unity. In this sense, Spinoza could affirm, in *Letter* 50 to Jarig Jellesz: "I establish that God can only be very improperly called one and unique (*Deum non, nisi valde improprie, unum, vel unicum dici posse*) regarding essence, but this can be said with all rigor regarding existence" (Spinoza 1925, Letter 50 to Jarig Jellesz, G. IV, p. 239). And in the *Ethics*, Spinoza related only to the unique existence of substance (*unicam substantiam existere*), and not to its essence (Spinoza 1925, Ethics I, 10, scholium).

The *difference* is an average discernment: two things are different if their attributes are dissimilar, although they remain comparable in the species or genus to which they

[9] According to M. Gueroult, it was Hegel who introduced the subjective interpretion of Spinoza's attributes. See (Gueroult, 1968, pp. 428-429).

belong. Finally, the *distinction* is an even weaker discernment: two things are distinct if, belonging to the same species, they can only be distinguished by number or size. However, *Ethics* I, 4, like *Ethics* I, 5, Demonstration, starting from the notion of *distinction*, passes, without justifying the change of terminology, to the notion of *diversity* (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 5, demonstration). Johannes Bredenburg sought to show that, in accordance with the assertions of *De Deo*, attributes maintain a relationship of diversity that accounts for the monism of substance (Bredenburg, 1675, p. 60). On the contrary, Orobio de Castro emphasizes that the expression *ex diversitate* precisely distinguishes, in a maximum way, between attributes and substances, thus contradicting the notion of substantial monism. This explanation is in accordance with *Ethics* I, 2, which states that "Two substances having different attributes (*diversa attributa*) have nothing in common with each other" (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 2). Orobio de Castro also specifies that the notion of *diversity* should not apply to the affections of substances, that is to say, to their modes, since these differ from each other only in a minimal way, and Spinoza should then have used the term *distinctio*. Now, while seeking to affirm a minimal discernment between substances, Spinoza posits that not only attributes, but also modes maintain a relationship of *diversity* of maximum dissimilarity: *ex diversitate attributorum*, and *ex diversitate affectionum*. Moreover, in Spinoza's hypothesis that there could be several distinct substances (*Si darentur plures distinctæ*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 5, demonstration), according to Orobio de Castro, these substances should not have diverse attributes (*diversitate attributum*). If Spinoza had been consistent, he should have noted, from a terminological point of view, that attributes are only distinct and not diverse. Orobio de Castro's differentiated classification then calls into question the theoretical basis of *Ethics* I, 4-5 and Demonstration, thus proving that Spinoza's monism of substance remains unfounded (Feldman ,1988, pp. 228-229).

Founding immanence?

Orobio de Castro notes that the expression *Deus sive Natura (*Spinoza, 1925, Ethics IV, Preface*)* only veils Spinoza's inability to prove the monism of substance, which he seeks to transfer to the unity of nature. The *Ethics* clearly implies that *natura naturans* cannot be reduced to *natura naturata*, insofar as the former designates "that which is in itself and is conceived by itself (*quod in se est et per se concipitur*)," while the latter concerns "all that follows from the necessity of the nature of God (*omne quod ex necessitae Dei naturae*)" (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 29 scholium; Curley, 1988, p. 37). But the precise relations between the two natures were never made explicit by Spinoza, nor did succeed to account for the production of natured nature from naturing nature. As stressed by Jonathan F. Bennet, "the absence of an effective contrast between God and not-God" allows to qualify Spinoza as both a pantheist and an atheist (Bennett, 1984, p. 32).

For Spinoza, as everything proceeds from God, the finite mode must be determined by God or by His attributes, in so far as He is modified by such and such a modification (*quatenus modificatum est tali modificatione*), that is to say, by a finite mode (Spinoza,

1925, Ethics I, 22). The modes are nothing but "affections of the attributes of God (*nisi Dei attributorum affectiones*)" (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 28, demonstration). Spinoza defined mode both in an ontological way and an epistemological way: "That which is in something else and is conceived by this other thing (*id quod in alio est et per id in quo est concipitur*)." Nevertheless, having identified mode with the affection of the attribute, he never explained how modes derive from the nature of God (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, definition V; Gueroult, 1968, p. 426, Kennington, 1980, p. 302), even if, *qua-substance*, God remains first according to *Ethics* I, 1 (*substantia prior est natura suis affectionibus*), Now, if the substance is thus defined as that which is not a mode, and prior to its affections, and can thus be defined independently of them (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics, I, 5, demonstration), however, it is necessary to know beforehand what a mode and an affection are in order to know what a substance is. And the definition of the mode is only given further on, in Definition V.

Then we need to ask how can the mode, as *qua-modification* of substance, be produced? Indeed, the mode must already pre-exist the modification it brings about of the substance which, thus modified, can then produce the mode. For Spinoza, the answer to this question seems to be found in the identification of *causa sui* with the causality that produces modes: "in the sense that God is said to be the cause of Himself, He must also be said to be the cause of all things (*eo sensu quo Deus dicitur causa sui, etiam omnium rerum causa dicendus est*)" (Spinoza 1925, Ethics I, 25, scholium). This causal equivalence implies, as Gueroult notes, that the things produced, constituting the inherent properties of God, are to this extent God Himself, since He cannot cause Himself without necessarily causing them (Gueroult, 1968, pp. 266-267). Let us emphasize that the relationship of God to the universe, as Spinoza conceived it, ceases to be the traditional one of the infinite to the finite, to become that of the cause to its effect, by positing finite modes as properties. However, these notions are heterogenous: causality is assigned to the extensional order, whereas quality is assigned to the intensional order. Spinoza has never explained the assimilation he operates between these two orders, which he simply posits as the equivalence between cause and reason (*causa sive ratio*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 11 aliter).[10] Describing this equivalence, as surprising, Alexandre Matheron points out that, for example, a geometric figure has many properties but it produces no effect (Matheron, 1991, p. 85).

For all these reasons, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of necessity that Spinoza always sought to identify: logical necessity and causal necessity. Spinoza never deduced their identification, which seems to have been made possible, particularly using the terms *sequitur*[11] (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 16 demonstration and I, 17 scholium), *possible,*[12] and *potest*[13] (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 6 and demonstration). All these terms are fundamentally ambiguous because they have both a logical and a

[10] On the epistemological problems posed by Spinoza's constant shift from extensive use to intensive use. See Rozenberg, 2023, pp. 35-42.

[11] Melamed (2012a, p. 382 n69) has noted the equivocal use of the term *sequuntur*.

[12] In *Ethics*, IV, definition IV, the term *possibile* is used in a causal sense, whereas, for example, in *Ethics* IV, 11 and 12, it is used in a logical sense.

[13] The beginning of the proof uses "possunt" in the logical sense, or logical property, while the end of this proof uses "potest" in the causal sense. See Melamed, 2015, pp. 50, 89n5.

causal connotation. It is this fundamental ambiguity that allows Spinoza to assimilate the logico-metaphysical necessity, proper to infinite substance, of the intensional order, to the causal necessity of the production of finite modes, of the extensional order.[14]

In *Ethics* I, 28, Demonstration, the notion of modification, by which Spinoza thinks he can account for the production of finite modes by the infinite substance, is based on the use of the term *quatenus*. It should be noted that this usage allows for circular reasoning. Spinoza presupposes in the premises of the Demonstration of *Ethics* I, 28, the existence of finite modes capable of modifying the divine substance. Thus, he posits that what is finite must therefore follow from God or from one of his attributes, "in so far as He is considered to be affected by some modes" (*quatenus aliquo modo affectum consideratur*). And Spinoza then affirms "subsequently" (*deinde*), but without any deduction; as he states: "Then this cause or mode... must also be determined by another, which is also finite and has a determined existence." (*Deinde hæc rursus causa sive hic modus … debuit etiam determinari ab alia quæ etiam finita est et determinatam habet existentiam*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 28, Demonstration). I recalled earlier that Spinoza thus posits in a circular way modes as affections of substance, in order to explain the production of modes. He first supposes the existence of modes as affections of substance, even before he has given an account of their productions. In addition, this attempt to explain the production of modes is opposed to Spinoza's earlier assertion that the finite cannot be produced by an infinite attribute, because everything that follows from infinity necessarily exists as infinite and not as finite (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 22). In other words, as John Caird points out, it amounts to assuming "without proof what has already been denied" (Caird, 1888, p. 165). It should also be noted that the notion of causality can only concern the finite and never the infinite. For the cause, whether efficient or posited as *causa-sui*, exhausts its whole being in its effects, and therefore there can never be infinite effects from infinite causes, for the latter would then necessarily limit their infinity. As Maimonides had shown, God cannot be considered a cause, because this would imply that His existence is linked to the effects He produces (Maimonides, 1963, pp. 118-119). Causality is confined to the finite domain, where it is determined by the order of succession or coincidence between causes and effects (Caird, 1888, p. 167). In this sense, Orobio de Castro has shown, contrary to Spinoza, that no reduplicative formulation (*in reduplication)* can, as a cause (*quatenus causat*), equate the effect to its cause: "No cause, in its act of causing, produces an effect which is entirely similar to itself as a cause, even if the effect is univocal (that is to say, follows directly from it)" (*causa ut causat, nullus effectus quamtumvis univocus, est qualis sua causa ut causans*) (Orobio de Castro, 1703, pp. 29-30).

The term quatenus as a suture operator between incommensurable orders

The term *quatenus*, like that of *jam*, plays a decisive role in the logic of *Ethics*, by attempting to bring together incommensurable notions, such as that of mode and

[14] See Friedman (1986, pp. 371-407 and especially pp. 375-380) for how the finite follows from the Infinite in Spinoza's metaphysical system.

substance, finite and infinite, causality and conception, etc. In all cases, Spinoza uses a *petitio principii*, since the *quatenus* remains precisely what needs to be explained, and it cannot therefore come to resolve the contradictions that it ultimately masks. Spinoza systematically employs the adverb *quatenus* to attempt to unify the naturing order concerning the notions of substance and attribute, and the natured order proper to the notion of mode.

Although Spinoza assigned to the adverb *quatenus* the burden of avoiding any contradiction regarding monism, he never defined its conceptual status, and he uses this term in four different senses: formal, abstract, causal, and conditional (Krop, 2014, p. 299, Powell, 1906, p. 157 n2).[15] From a stylistic point of view, the use of the adverb *quatenus* is monotonous (Kajanto, 2005, p. 52), and in the *Ethics* Spinoza utilizes it 444 times in a logical sense, and he uses the verb *sequi* 247 times, in a causal sense. Although he posited the identity between logic and causality, the use of the term *quatenus* appears somewhat disproportionate to that of the term *sequi* (Lærke, 2012, p.264). It is also found utilized in the sense of *from* and *because of* (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics II, 49, TTP, IV, 3; TTP, IV, 3).

It may also be noted that, for example, in *Ethics* II, 21, Scholium, Spinoza uses the term *jam* in order to justify what is commonly called psycho-physical parallelism: "the mind and the body are one and the same individual, who conceives himself sometimes (*jam*) under the attribute of thought, sometimes (*jam*) under the attribute extended (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics, II, 21, Scholium). The term *jam* makes it possible to establish what Chantal Jaquet called a "logic of alternation," according to which we can understand things, either from the point of view of the attribute of thought, or from the point of view of the attribute of extension (Jaquet, 2012, pp. 69-79). In fact, the adverb *quatenus* is the driving force behind this logic of alternation.

Let's recall that this adverb was frequently used in the seventeenth century. For example, Suarez used it, among other things, to justify the notion of the Trinity (Suarez, 1856, IV, XIII), and in the *Third Meditation*, Descartes evokes those ideas that "are of certain ways of thinking" (*quatenus ideae istae cogitandi*) (Descartes, 1996, AT IX, 27; AT VII, 35). In the *Fourth Meditation*, he emphasizes the idea of "the human mind, insofar as it is a thing that thinks" (*quatenus est res cogitans*) (Descartes, 1996, AT IX, 42; AT VII, 53; Principia I, 9; AT VIII, p. 30-31). In all these cases, the Cartesian use of the adverb *quatenus* was limited to the sole domain of thought, which he did not seek to link to another fundamentally heterogeneous domain.

The term *quatenus* is one of the species of what Aristotle called reduplication (*ἐπαναδίπλωσις, iteration)* of the same term (Aristotle, Prior Anal. I, 38, 49a11-49b1). Spinoza assigned to it the function of uniting the level of the absolute and the level of the natured, in order to prove the immanence of the infinite substance to its finite modes (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics II, 9, Naess 2005, p. 56). However, he never deduced the way in which finite modes are produced by infinite substance, although he did attempt

[15] On the coherence of the different uses of the term *quatenus,* see Rauh, 1890.

to bridge, what Samuel Newlands called the "gap" between modes and substance (Newlands, 2018), by means of the adverb *quatenus*.[16]

Orobio de Castro pointed out that, if regarding the essence of a thing its attributes are necessary, this is no longer true of the existence of that thing, which always remains subject to a combination of essences and random circumstances. He specifies that the necessity of the essence of a thing should not be confused with the contingency of its existence. On this point, Orobio de Castro seems to agree with Spinoza, who assumed that "for example if there are twenty men in nature... it will not be sufficient (to account for the existence of these twenty men) to give the cause of human nature in general." (*Si exempli gratia in rerum natura 20 homines existant non satis erit (ut scilicet rationem reddamus cur 20 homines existant) causam naturæ humanæ in genere ostendere*). However, Spinoza does not assert the contingency of the existence of particular individuals but posits that "there must necessarily be a cause for the existence of each of them" (*uniuscujusque debet necessario dari causa cur existat*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, scholium).

If Orobio de Castro rejects absolute necessitarism, because it leaves no room for contingency, he nevertheless provides the conditions that allow to conceive legitimately the notion of necessity. He thus uses a reduplicative proposition such as "white as white is necessarily white" (*ut album, quatenus album, necessario est album*) (Orobio de Castro, 1703, p. 44). In contrast, Spinoza extends such a necessity to all natural modes: "All doing, and every action, is necessarily of such a kind that it could not have been otherwise" (*omne agere, et omnis actio, talis necessario est, ut aliter esse non potuisset*). Orobio de Castro's use of the term *quatenus* remains limited to the same reduplicated domain, whereas Spinoza's use of it is expanded to some entirely distinct domains. Then Orobio de Castro notes that, if an action occurs in existence, it is always because of an essence that is at the origin of this power to act, but this action is not itself a "necessary existence" (*sit necessariae existentiae*). However, he specifies the circumstances in which a proposition remains "eternally true" (*propositio aeternae veritatis*). He gives as an example the statement: "man is reasonable" (*homo est rationalis*). This truth is affirmed whenever a man exists, and as a result that particular man is endowed with the faculty of reasoning. It is only in this sense that the essential attribute of a thing necessarily exists (Orobio de Castro, 1703, p. 45).

It should be noted that, generally speaking, the adverb *quatenus* determines semantic contexts of an intensional order, which are therefore referentially opaque (Jarrett, 1977, p. 87, note 21, Hennig, 2011, pp. 147-149). Indeed, Leibniz emphasizes that a redundant expression is reflexive because it refers to our thoughts (Belaval, 2004, p. 126 n. 77). But Spinoza uses this type of expression to operate an illegitimate passage between the intensional and extensional orders. In this regard, the term *quatenus*, according to Spinozism, would carry a function akin to the one Jacques Lacan, and subsequently Jacques-Alain Miller, allocated to the term "suture" which attempts to link incommunicable orders (Lacan, 1973, p. 127, Miller, 1966, p. 39). In the context of Spinozism, the suture remains a purely tautological expression, devoid of any demonstrative content, and it only aims to circumvent the difficulties of Spinoza's system (Caird, 1888, p. 166). William James emphasized that the *quatenus* is the

[16] On the difficulties encountered by Spinozism in deducing finite modes from infinite substance, see Rozenberg, 2023, pp. 199-208; Powell, 1906, pp. 157-160.

mainspring of Spinozism as a whole, insofar as it has the task of reconciling metaphysical unity with the plurality of phenomena. But this reconciliation remains in fact impossible, because its use concerning the infinite order (*quatenus infinitus*) cannot equal that of the human order (*quatenus humanam mentem constituit*). The *qua*-absolute world is unique and it falls under an intensional order, while the *qua*-multiple world belongs to extensional classes (James, 1909, p. 47)

As Robert Scruton points out, without the term *quatenus*, everything that, for Spinoza, links the divine domain to the human domain would then be destroyed (Scruton, 2002, p. 74). Indeed, in the absence of any real mediation, the infinite and the finite remain entirely incommensurable. This task of mediation, which Spinoza tried to assign to the term *quatenus,* has been described as magical (Newlands, 2018, p. 44). As a result, it is part of what Jules Vuillemin identified in Spinoza's German successors, as promoting a "romantic madness," since its dialectic consists of identifying entirely contrary entities (Vuillemin, 1962, p. 285).

Finally, let us recall that Gilles Deleuze saw in the Spinozist use of *quatenus* the theoretical formula of pantheism; positing that the forms that qualify God can also qualify finite modes (Deleuze, 1981). The adverb *quatenus* aims to operate a congruence between the *natura naturata*, the multiple nature of finite modes belonging to the extensional order, and the *natura naturans*, the single substance, belonging to the intensional order (Adler, 1989, p. 49). It is precisely the adverb *quatenus* that allows Spinoza to affirm his philosophy of immanence, considering that "all the modes of God's attributes … as things that are in God and that cannot, without God, be or be conceived (*omnes Dei attributorum modos quatenus considerantur ut res quæ in Deo sunt et quæ sine Deo nec esse nec concipi possunt*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 29, scholium).

The adverb quatenus and the question of God's modifications

The reduplicative process of the *quatenus* also applies to the expression *eo sensu*, whereby, "in the sense in which God is said to be the cause of Himself (*eo sensu quo Deus dicitur causa sui),*" He is also "the cause of all things (*omnium rerum causa*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, scholium). Thus God, in so far as He is modified by mode *a*, causes God in so far as He is modified by mode *b*. Finite causality would then be nothing but divine self-causality, as it is modified in a particular way (Lærke, 2013, pp. 72-73, Sangiacomo and Nachtomy, 2018, p. 118).

As I recalled previously, according to Spinoza, infinity can exclusively follow from infinity (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 22), whereas a finite thing can only be produced by "another cause which is itself finite (*quae etiam finita*)" (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 28). He seeks also to show that substance produces finite things, since there is nothing apart from substance and modes, and that everything has been predetermined (*praedeterminata*) by God (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, Appendix). However, finite modes are not produced by eternal attributes, and modes are only the affections or modifications of the substance which interact with each other (Gueroult, 1968, p. 339). Let us recall that, in *Ethics* I, Demonstration, modes follow substance, in so far (*quatenus*) as we consider God or a certain attribute of God "as affected in a certain

way (*aliquo modo affectum*)." This passage has been the subject of various translations, none of which seems to really account for the content of the text (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, Demonstration).[17] I think that Yirmiyahu Yovel's Hebrew translation expresses Spinoza's thought more clearly on this point, emphasizing the dynamic character of the mode: "as we consider (God) (*ba'asher ro'ym 'oto*) to be activated (*kemuf'al*), or to be particularized *(kemufrat*) (Yovel's note), by any mode (*'ofen*)." (Yovel, 2003, p. 106) If the modes "are nothing other than the affections of the attributes of God (*nihil sunt, nisi Dei attributorum affectiones*)," they are none the less active because of the infinite dynamism proper to finite modes. In fact, the finite modes, by which "the attributes of God are expressed in a certain and definite manner (*quibus Dei attributa certo et determinato modo expressuntur*)," remain active by their *conatus* (*in suo esse perseverare conatur*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics III, 6, Demonstration), and they then possess an aspect of infinity (Shein, 2018, pp. 433-451).[18] Therefore, finite modes, in so far as they proceed from the competitive interplay of all conatus, must also be considered as being infinite, although they are only expressed in finite forms (Vinciguerra, 2005, p. 85).

It should also be noted that the term *affectus*, even when used in connection with God, is a passive term. Emphasizing that all things are found in God (*Omnia ... in Deo sunt*), Spinoza adds that there is "no reason to say that God suffers from anything else (*quare nulla ratione dici potest Deum ab alio pati*)" (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 15, scholium). Although God does not suffer from anything external to Him, yet when He produces the modes by which He is affected, and therefore this passivity proceeds solely from His activity, the fact remains, as Francis Kaplan points out, that the Spinozist God is also passive. This then contradicts the absolute perfection of God which necessarily envelops His essence (*absolutamque perfectionem involvit*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 11, scholium, Kaplan, 1998, p. 96).

God's power consists in producing the infinity of finite modes, and His essence is identified with His power (*Dei potentia est ipsa ipsius essentia) (Spinoza 1925, Ethics, I, 34, Ethics II, 3 scholium).* This one consists in producing His own existence through the production of the infinity of His modes. Wherefore, although a substance is by nature prior to its affections (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 1), the divine power is not itself prior to the production of its modes but is confounded with it. Spinoza specifies that "God was not before his decrees (*ante sua decreta non fuisse*), and without them He cannot be" (*nec sine ipsis esse posse*). Now, these decrees constitute precisely the modes of substance, since they are qualified as "decrees in created things" *(rebus creatis decreta)* (Spinoza 1925, Ethics I, scholium II*).* We thus encounter a real paradox. A being *in se* et *per se concipitur* cannot depend on any being *in alio* that He necessarily produces, but in fact He cannot exist without these beings *in alio*. This paradox calls into question the autonomy that is generally granted to *natura naturans* in relation to *natura naturata*, in order to guarantee the ontological dependence of the second nature on the first nature (Melamed, 2012b, pp. 208-209). The distinction between the two natures therefore

[17] Let us recall, for example, some different translations of this passage: Pautrat: " qu'on Le considère affecté d'une certaine manière ;" Elwes: "is considered as in some way modified" and Stern: "sofern dieses als in irgendeiner Weise erregt betrachtet wird."

[18] Kristin Primus (2023, pp. 265-288) pointed out that, from the point of view of their essence, finite modes are indeed infinite and eternal.

remains problematic, and as Guéroult points out, there is actually an equality between them, making them appear as "two sides of the same coin" (Gueroult, 1968, p. 267).

In *Ethics* I, 15, Scholium, taking up the example of water, the adverb *quatenus* is used by Spinoza twice: by positing that "water insofar as it is water (*aqua quatenus aqua*)" can be conceived as divisible, but not "insofar as it is corporeal substance (*quatenus substantia est corporea*)." It should be noted that these uses of the adverb *quatenus* precisely enable Spinoza to reject the idea that "matter ... would be unworthy of the divine nature (*materia ... cur divina natura indigna esset*) (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, scholium). This is why it seems possible to replace the notion of substance as defined in the *De Deo* (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, definition III), by that of matter, which can also be posited as "that which is in itself and is conceived by itself" (*quod in se est* et *per se concipitur*), thus transforming Spinoza's immanence into pure materialism (Young, 1974, pp. 182-183).

It follows from this analysis that finite modes cannot be produced by attributes, which are themselves infinite and eternal. Modes are only the affections or modifications of the substance, which interact with each other (Gueroult, 1968, p. 339). It is therefore strictly impossible to derive the production of finite modes from substance itself, or even from infinite modes, because everything that results from an infinite mode, immediate or mediate, must necessarily remain infinite (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics I, 23). This is why Spinoza failed in geometrically deducing the finite from infinity, but only in positing the production of finite modes from the infinity of their interactions (Balthasar, 1926, pp. 459-460). Therefore, if the notion of God ultimately designates only the set of natural modes, then this notion, according to Orobio de Castro, becomes superfluous, because it remains redundant in relation to that of nature, and the theory of immanence therefore leads to pure atheism (Orobio de Castro, 1703, p. 65).

The qualitative and quantitative aspects of Spinozism: an unresolved tension?

As I have pointed out earlier, Spinozism was formed from an unthought passage between two differentiated semantic orders, intensional and extensional, whose distinction Spinoza did not always respect.

While the Cartesian analytic method is inductive and perceptual, and therefore of an extensional order, Spinoza's synthetic and geometric method is deductive, and proceeds, from an intensional order, by concepts and definitions (Haserot, 1950, p. 483). As early as the *Short Treatise*, Spinoza rejects extensional knowledge by genres and differences (*van geslagt en onderscheid*), because such a method calls for definitions that are not capable of producing any new knowledge (Spinoza, 1925, KV I, VII, 9, G I, 46). The privilege he will then give to the *more geometrico* implies a rejection of experience, and therefore a depreciation of the extensional procedures related to induction (Saisset, 1842, XXXVI-XXXVIII). It must be emphasized that Spinoza's

metaphysical conceptuality is of an intensional order (Newlands, 2006, pp. 42-43),[19] even if extensional logic also intervenes in the *Ethics* (LeBuffe, 2010, pp. 534-535).

Charles Ramond has identified, notably in *Letter* 12 to Lodewijk Meyer, "violent clashes" between qualitative and quantitative conceptions. These clashes are constitutive of Spinozism determining, *inter alia*, the distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. I specify that the logic of quality falls under an intensional order, whereas that of quantity proceeds from an extensional order (Badesa 2004, 10, note 1). Win Klever notes that in the *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione* § 40, Spinoza passes, without any transition, from the quantity of knowledge (*quo plura mens novit*) to the quality of the mind's understanding of its own powers concerning the order of nature (*eo melius et suas vires, et ordinem Naturæ intelligit*). According to Spinoza, the greater the knowledge of nature (*quantity*), then the better will be our knowledge (*quality*) (Spinoza, 1925, TIE § 40; Klever, 1994, p. 118, note 17). Ramond specifies that the qualitative aspect presents Spinoza as a Neoplatonic sage, while the quantitative aspect makes him a materialist thinker (Ramond, 1995, p. 332). As I have shown previously, Spinoza tried to make a transition between these two orders, by means of semantic operators, and in particular the terms *tanquam*, *jam*, and especially *quatenus*. Through the widespread use of these operators, Spinoza sought to overcome the opposition between intension and extension, by means of some non-deduced transitions from one order to another. This distinction has been described as the "distinction of distinctions," insomuch as it enables to stratify the differentiated domains of the intelligibility of reality (Rovere, 2003-2004, p. 33; Auroux, 2008, p. 22). This is why Spinoza failed in erasing the fundamental dualisms from which his philosophical system was elaborated. Therefore, many terms of *the Ethics* remain ambiguous, and have a double meaning, referring indifferently to logical and physical determinations (Garrett, 2003, p. 61), the first being of intensional order and the second being of extensional order.

The problematic use of semantic terms, like *quatenus*, makes it possible to assimilate certain propositions of the *Ethics* to paradoxes of logic, to the point that the entire *Ethics* has been described as a complex version of the *Liar's Paradox* (Nielsen, 2003, p. 28). Indeed, according to Bertrand Russell, monism is the result of a flawed logic, inspired by mysticism (Russell, 1927, p. 264), which confuses the "class," which is extensive in nature, and the "category," which is intensive in nature (Koyré, 1947, p. 33; Ortigue, 1982, p. 182; Rozenberg, 1994, pp. 175-182). Let us recall that Epimenides' proposition, "All Cretans are liars," which presents itself as "the assertion *Y* that *X* is making at this moment is false," becomes a sophism when it is transformed into a sui-referential statement: "I lie." Nonsense arises when the statement claims to apply to itself. As Alexandre Koyré points out, no concept can be applied to itself, at the risk of presenting real ambiguity. In accordance with Orobio de Castro's remark that I previously mentioned. Koyré underlined that the "term remains the same; its meaning, however, changes (Koyré, 1947, p. 13; Lacan, 1973, p. 127). The enunciated always derives from the enunciation, but it also finds itself shifted compared to the

[19] Olli Koistinen (1996, pp. 23-38) has shown that it is the causal explanation that is of an intensional order, while the causal relations remain of an extensional order.

enunciation. Enunciation, like the naturing, always has an additional dimension (*n+1*) in relation to the enunciated (*n*), which, like the natured, regarding the naturing, cannot be identified with the enunciation. Therefore, what is enunciated can never join the act of enunciation from which it derives. Similarly, the *naturata* cannot fully comprehend the *naturans*. In Russellian terms, the enunciation proceeds from a hierarchy of functions that has an additional dimension compared to the hierarchy of propositions (Russell, 1969, p. 73).

The notion of immanence is itself paradoxical, inasmuch as it aims to cancel the barrier that traditionally separates eternity and duration, God and the world. The monism of substance, implying in particular the reduction of the human mind to an idea of the attribute of thought, obliged Spinoza to cancel all distinction between human thought and divine thought, in order to aim at "an adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God (*adæquatam habet cognitionem æternæ et infinitæ essentiæ Dei*)" (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics II, 47). However, human thought, being primitively analytical, rests on sensible experience, and it functions primarily in an extensional order, whereas divine thought, which is synthetic and intuitive in nature, is of an intensional order. Spinoza claimed to have "an idea of God as clear as of the triangle (*de Deo tam claram, quam de triangulo habeam ideam*), without, however, having such a clear "image (*imagem*)" (Spinoza 1925, Letter 56 to Boxel, G. IV, 261). Contrary to what Spinoza asserts, it should be stressed that the domain *sub specie æternitatis* is beyond man's reach, first, because his language is always expressed temporally (Kojève, 1947, pp. 351-354), secondly, forasmuch it is impossible to access the absolute through discursive procedures (Kolakowski, 2004, p. 25). Alexandre Kojève drew the mystical consequences of Spinoza's claim to have a direct connection to eternity. He noted that this presupposes that he "must *be* God from all eternity in order to be able to write or think his *Ethics*... Of course, this is the pinnacle of absurdity." (Kojève, 1947, p. 354)

In contrast, Maimonides emphasized that it is not "in the power of man to grasp and attain the knowledge of the Creator (*'eyn koah be'adam lehasyg we-limço' d'ato shel bore'*)," and he quotes in support of his thesis the verse of *Isaiah* 55:8: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways (*ky l'o mahshvotay mahshevotykem, we-l'o darkykem derakaÿ*). [20] In this sense, pantheistic monism aspires to cancel any ontological distinction between man and God, expressing itself respectively through the extensional and intensional orders. For Spinoza, such a cancellation was made possible by his systematic use of the adverb *quatenus*, as I have shown previously. I will now examine, concerning this adverb, on the one hand, the sources that Spinoza could find in Jewish philosophy, and on the other hand, the fundamental differences between the Spinozist use and the Jewish philosophical use of apparently equivalent terms.

[20] I quote here *The Guide for the Perplexed* in the Hebrew edition of *Moreh Nevukym* by R. Yosef Q'apah, Jerusalem, M. ha-Rav Kook, 1977. This translation follows R. Shmuel Ibn Tibbon's translation that Spinoza possessed, and it corrected most its obscurities. H. Kasher, Ha-'adam ha-meharer. 'Iyun leshony bemishnat ha-Rambam. In P. Cohen (Ed.). *'Al Yad Yehy'el*. Makon Masha"ah, 2018, p.218.

The quatenus in Jewish philosophy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

According to Julie R. Klein, the term *quatenus,* which, in Spinoza, allows to make a transition from the naturing point of view to the natured point of view, would take up the expressions of Gersonides (1288-1344): *be'ofen mah* (in such a way as), and *miçydo* (from his point of view). These expressions, which seem to be equivalent to the term *quatenus*, would have allowed, in a similar way, these two authors to avoid dualism and the multiplication of real entities (Klein, 2003, p. 35; Klein, 2014, p. 183). In general, the commentators stressed the probable influence of Gersonides on Spinoza, who describes him as an "extremely learned man" (*virum alias eruditissimum*) (Spinoza, 1925, TTP IX, annotation 16, G III, 256). Warren Zev Harvey has noted, on the one hand, a convergence between the two authors concerning the notion of *conatus (*Harvey, 2012, pp. 273-297*),* and on the other hand between the Spinozist notion of "*amor Dei intellectualis*" and the Gersonide notion of desire (*hesheq*) (Harvey, 1998, pp. 103-104). Menachem Kellner has suggested that Gersonides announces the Spinozist identification of the *Deus sive Natura* (Spinoza, 1925, Ethics IV, Preface; Kellner, 1998, p.22). Concerning such an identification, it should be noted that, if the commentary on the *Song of Songs* seems to associate God and nature, this association in fact concerns Gersonides' reference to Aristotle's writings on his *Historia Animalium* (Gaziel 2012, pp.243-271). However, in *Milhamot Ha-Shem* (The Wars of the Lord), he explicitly states that "since God has ordained the whole plan of nature (*sider zeh ha-tev'a*), it seems impossible for a natural being to have the power to change nature and its order of functioning (*leshanot ha-tev'a we-ha-sidur*), unlike God, who has ordained ('*asher sider*) this nature" (Gersonides, 1923, pp. VI, II, 10, 445; Feldman, 1984, p. 474). Gersonides thus conceives of God as being transcendent in relation to the nature He orders, without ever identifying them but underlying that God can always change nature.

Concerning the term *quatenus*, Idit Dobbs-Weinstein has tried to draw a parallel between certain passages of Gersonides' *Super-commentary* on the *De Anima*, and Spinoza's *Ethics*. She particularly insists on the perspectivist use of the expression "in this regard" (*me-ha-çad*) (Dobbs-Weinstein, 1998, pp. 205-206). Following her, Julie R. Klein emphasized the similarity between Spinoza's use of expressions such as "as far as possible" *(quamprimus*) and the Hebrew use of "manner to" or "to a certain extent" (*be'ofen mah*). She also noted the proximity between the term *quatenus* and the term *miçad,* each of which expressed two different ways of conceiving the same thing. Such expressions would have allowed these two authors to perceive real things, while avoiding positing abstractions and separate entities. For these two authors, it would be a question of promoting an approach qualified both as aspectival and perspectival (Klein 2003, p. 35; Klein, 2014, p. 183).

By referring directly to several texts by Gersonides, I wish to test the relevance of such a convergence. In his work *Milhamot Ha-Shem*, the expression *be'ofen mah* generally means *in such a way to* (Gersonides, 1923, III, V, 3, 233-234). But in his commentary on the *Song of Songs*, to which Klein refers, Gersonides uses the expression *be'ofen mah* in a perspectival sense: "from the point of view of the material and potential intellect, and from the point of view of the degrees of the act (*be'ofen mah lesekel ha-hyiul'any u-be'ofen mah bemadregat ha-po'al*) (Gersonides, 1860, 9a; Klein, 2002,

pp. 295-324; Lærke, 2017, pp. 14-15, note 15). It should be noted, however, that Gersonides here refers to *Aristotle's De Anima*, to describe the complementary points of view of potential and act, but without referring to any incommensurable orders, such as those of the *natura naturans* and the *natura naturata*, which Spinoza's pantheism tried to identify (Gueroult, 1968, p. 267). Similarly, Gersonides uses the terms "miçad" and "miçydo," which signify *according to* and *on the side of*. However, while referring to the various aspects that must be taken into account, these terms do not in any way link ontologically separate domains (Gersonides, 1923, I, 11, 82; V, III, 11, 277; VI, II, 8, 435; Gersonides, 1860, 4a). In his Super-commentaries on Averroes, Gersonides uses the term *miçad* several times, in order to specify the "concrete domain insofar as it is concrete in act" *(ha-muḥash miçad shehu' muḥash be-po'al*) (Gersonides, 1984, p. 397). By the term *miçad*, he also emphasizes that "something limited can only exist in potential" *(shel'o ymç'a bilty ba'al taḳlyt 'el'a miçad ha-koah*) (Gersonides, 2006, p.10). Likewise, referring to Averroes, Gersonides specifies that, when speaking of a builder we do not refer to an individual insofar as he is a man (*miçad mah shehu' 'adam*), since by the act of building, the builder builds *as* a builder and not *as* a man (*we-l'o miçad mah shehu' 'adam*), because not every man is a builder (*ky 'eyn kol 'adam boneh*) (Gersonides, 1923, pp. I, 4, 28; Feldman, 1984, p. 134).

As J. R. Klein suggests, it seems that terms equivalent to that of *quatenus* were taken up by Gersonides from Aristotle, who noted, for example, that quantities and numbers "are not taken as (*non quatenus*), but as having a magnitude and a divisibility" (Klein, 2014, p. 183n18; Aristotle n.d., Metaphysics M, 3, 1077 b20; Tricot, 1974, p. 728 n1). However, in Aristotle, as well as in his Arab commentators (Avicenna, 1972, p. 53; Averroes, 2003, pp.112–115), the equivalent of the term *quatenus* is not used in a perspectival sense, but it means: "under the title of." In the same spirit, R. Hasdaï Crescas (1340-1411), who refers largely to Gersondes, uses the term "level" (*beḥynah*) to distinguish, from an epistemological point of view, between two distinct approaches. He thus emphasizes that the effect (*'alul*), at the level of its reason (*'iylah*), necessarily exists (*meḥuyav ha-meçy'ut*), while at the level of the effect itself, its existence is only possible (*mibehynat 'açmo 'efshar ha-meçy'ut*) (Hasdai Crescas, 1990, p. 266). These two levels do not belong to different domains.

It should also be noted that medieval commentators on the *Sefer Yeçyrah,* such as R. Abraham ben David de Posquières (1120-1198), used the expression *in connection with* or *based on* (*miçad*), which Gersonides would take up, to describe the complex system of the *sefyrot* (divine emanations). Thus, for example, a person's merit is determined in relation (*miçad*) to *sefyrah Ḥesed* (generosity), while his guilt is in relation (*miçad*) to *sefyrah Dyn* (rigor) (Perush ha-R'aved 1965, II, 1, 74). R. M'eyr Ibn Gabay (1480-1540) specified that the changes that man remains capable of perceiving in divine actions should only be conceived in relation to us (*miçydenu*), and not in relation to God (*miçydo*) (M'eyr Ibn Gabay, 1890, 14a). In this sense, and contrary to Spinoza's use of the adverb *quatenus*, the term *miçad* underlines the uncrossable distance between the divine and the human domains.

Conclusion

Starting from the fact that Spinoza was quickly considered an atheist, particularly by Itshaq Orobio de Castro, I began by analyzing this author's critique of the logic of the *Ethics*. He showed that Spinozism consists in imperceptibly shifting from a reference to God as traditionally defined by his uniqueness to His identification with multiple nature. He also emphasized that such a shift uses a semantic procedure, retaining the same reference but radically changing its meaning. He thus mentions reduplicative formulas such as the term *quatenus*. In this article, I have attempted to show the semantic role of the adverb *quatenus* in establishing the immanence of God in nature. I have therefore supported the thesis that the distinction between intensional and extensional orders reveals the difficulties of Spinozism, which is based entirely on an illegitimate shift from one order to another. These difficulties concern, among others, on the one hand, the notion of finite mode conceived as an affection of infinite substance, and the deduction of the finite domain from the infinite, and on the other hand, the permanent tension between the qualitative and quantitative points of view that Spinozism never managed to resolve. Finally, I sought to compare Spinoza's use of the adverb *quatenus* with that proposed by Jewish philosophy in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the classical period. While Spinoza's use of the term quatenus seems to have been inspired by the Hebrew expressions *be'ofen mah*, *miçydo*, or *behynah*, which Spinoza may have found in Gersonides' writings, among others, he completely transformed their meaning. In fact, he attempted to identify the ontological levels that these Hebrew expressions were specifically intended to distinguish.

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